

# WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A feature on a web site that presents items for customer evaluation in an item hierarchy having categories, the feature comprising:
  - a) a personalized folder in which users can store items for further consideration; and
  - b) a category overview page that automatically categorizes the items placed into the personalized folder utilizing some of the categories used in the item hierarchy, the category overview page then displaying the items in the personalized folder according to the categories used in the categorization.
2. The feature of claim 1, wherein the categories are divided into major categories and remaining categories.
3. The feature of claim 2, further comprising a major category page that lists only the major categories that contain items stored in the personalized folder.
4. The feature of claim 3, wherein the remaining categories are further divided into minor categories and subcategories.
5. The feature of claim 4, wherein the major category page lists the major categories and minor categories that contain items that have been placed in the personalized folder.
6. The feature of claim 5, further comprising:  
a separate category overview page for each minor category listed in the major category page;  
wherein each category overview page lists only those items categorized in the minor category associated with that category overview page; and  
further wherein the major category page contains links to each of the separate category overview pages.

7. The feature of claim 6, wherein each category overview page lists by subcategory all the items placed in the personalized folder that are categorized in the minor category appropriate for that category overview page.
8. The feature of claim 7, wherein each item listed in each category overview page contains a link to an item detail page containing detailed information about that item, and wherein each item detail page contains a link directly to the category overview page for the minor category of the item, and a link to the major category page.
9. The feature of claim 8, wherein the presence of multiple items within the same subcategory causes of the personalized folder a link to at least one of the other items in the same subcategory to appear on the item detail page for the items in that subcategory.
10. The feature of claim 9, further comprising comparison pages that contain comparisons of a subset of those items within the same subcategory.
11. The feature of claim 10, wherein the subset can vary from one item to all items in the subcategory, and further wherein the user can select the items in the subcategory to include in the subset.
12. The feature of claim 9, wherein the category overview page, the major category page, the item detail page, and the comparison page all contain a visual indication that the user is within the feature of the web site.
13. The feature of claim 1, wherein the category overview page contains specific information about the category relevant to the category overview page, further wherein the specific information is chosen from the set including: a frequently asked questions list, a glossary of relevant terms, and reliability data.
14. The feature of claim 4, further comprising an offer of a discount on a promoted item that is not in the personalized folder, where the promoted

item is categorized in at least one of the subcategories listed on the category overview page.

15. The feature of claim 1, further comprising an offer on the category overview page to discount one of the items listed on one of the category overview pages.
16. The feature of claim 15, wherein the offer to discount one of the listed items is presented only after the item has been listed on the category overview page for a preset period of time.
17. The feature of claim 15, wherein the offer to discount one of the listed items is presented only after the item has been listed on the category overview page for a preset number of visits by the user.
18. The feature of claim 12, further comprising a shopping assistant that presents items to the user based upon item attribute criteria selected by the user.
19. The feature of claim 18, further comprising a notification on the category overview page of a newly added item that matches the item attribute criteria previously used by the user to select items for the personalized folder using the shopping assistant.
20. The feature of claim 1, further comprising a mechanism accessible from the category overview page that allows a user to specify the importance of various item attributes for items listed on the category overview page.
21. The feature of claim 4, wherein some categories contain only a single subcategory.
22. The feature of claim 1, wherein the item constitutes a product offered for sale through the web site.
23. The feature of claim 1, wherein the item constitutes an investment opportunity.

24. The feature of claim 1, wherein the item constitutes a service offered through the web site.
25. A web site that presents items for customer evaluation comprising:
  - a) a product hierarchy containing multiple items available on the web, the product hierarchy having
    - i) categories and subcategories into which the items are categorized, and
    - ii) an item detail page containing detailed information about a single item; and
  - b) a site-within-a-site feature having the ability to store site-within-a-site items that have been selectively added to the site-within-a-site feature by the user for later consideration, the site-within-a-site feature having
    - i) a main site-within-a-site page listing the site-within-a-site items, and
    - ii) a site-within-a-site product detail page containing detailed information about a single site-within-a-site item, a link to the main site-within-a-site page, and at least one link to a second site-within-a-site product detail page for site-within-a-site item.
26. The web site of claim 25, wherein the product hierarchy further comprises an item comparison page that compares items within the same subcategory, wherein the items to be compared are selected by the user.
27. The web site of claim 26, wherein the site-within-a-site feature further comprises a site-within-a-site comparison page that compares site-within-a-site items, wherein the items to be compared are selected by the user, and wherein the site-within-a-site comparison page contains a link to the

site-within-a-site product detail page of each site-within-a-site item compared.

28. The web site of claim 27, wherein the site-within-a-site feature further contains categories and subcategories into which site-within-a-site items are automatically categorized when they are added to the feature.
29. The web site of claim 28, wherein the links within the site-within-a-site detail pages to other site-within-a-site detail pages exist only for detail pages related to items in the same subcategory.
30. The web site of claim 28, wherein the site-within-a-site comparison page compares only items that are categorized within the same subcategory.
31. The web site of claim 28, wherein the main site-within-a-site page lists only the categories that contain site-within-a-site items, and further comprising a category overview page that lists the site-within-a-site items within each category.
32. The web site of claim 31, wherein the category overview page contains specific information about the category relevant to the category overview page, further wherein the specific information is chosen from the set including: a frequently asked questions list, a glossary of relevant terms, and reliability data.
33. The web site of claim 31, further comprising an offer of a discount on a promoted item that is not a site-within-a-site item, where the promoted item is categorized in the same subcategory of at least one of the site-within-a-site items on the category overview page.
34. The web site of claim 31, further comprising an offer on the category overview page to discount one of the site-within-a-site items listed on the category overview pages.

35. The web site of claim 34, wherein the offer to discount one of the site-within-a-site items is presented only after the site-within-a-site item has been listed on the category overview page for a preset period of time.
36. The web site of claim 34, wherein the offer to discount one of the site-within-a-site items is presented only after the site-within-a-site item has been listed on the category overview page for a preset number of visits by the user.
37. The web site of claim 25, wherein the web site further comprises a shopping assistant that presents items to the user based upon item attribute criteria selected by the user.
38. The web site of claim 37, further comprising a notification on the category overview page of a newly added item that matches the item attribute criteria previously used by the user to select site-within-a-site items using the shopping assistant.
39. A web site for selling items to users comprising:
  - a) a hierarchical categorization scheme for organizing all of the items available on the web site;
  - b) an item hierarchy navigational tree for accessing item information using the hierarchical categorization scheme, said navigational tree having as its ultimate root a home page, and said navigational tree having as its leaf nodes item detail pages which contains information about a single item;
  - c) personalized storage means, unique to a user name, for storing item sections from a user;
  - d) an automatic categorization mechanism for automatically categorizing the user item selections according to the hierarchical categorization scheme;

- e) a second navigational tree for accessing item information for the user item selections, the second navigational tree also using the hierarchical categorization scheme with the home page as its ultimate root, and containing only item detail pages for the user item selections as its leaf nodes, with said second tree and said first tree having no leaf nodes in common, wherein the second navigational tree is expanded and pruned as the user adds and removes item selections from the personalized storage means.
40. The web site of claim 39, wherein at least one of the item detail pages of the second navigational tree contains a link directly to another item detail page of the second navigational tree.